Message from the Director

The call for sainthood for Pedro Arrupe, S.J., former Superior General of the Jesuits, began in February in Rome. Arrupe challenges Marquette and other Jesuit institutions to think in practical ways about how we combine prayer and faith with a pursuit of justice and compassion. To this end, we strive to form students to be men and women for others and take seriously the dual call of faith and justice.

At the Center for Peacemaking, we encourage students to grow in their understanding of faith and nonviolence, and to become engaged in the community in response to Arrupe’s challenge.

The following pages include stories of Marquette students whose lives have been transformed because of your generosity and support. Thank you for providing these opportunities—and so many more—for our students to be, in the words of Arrupe, men and women for others.

You provided Chiana the opportunity to pursue her passion for peace

During the first week of her freshman year, Chiana applied for and was hired to be a Catholic Relief Services (CRS) student ambassador. In this role, Chiana coordinated efforts across campus to educate her peers about issues including human trafficking, migration, and climate change.

Chiana also attended the SOA-Watch vigil in Ft. Benning, GA during her first semester on campus. During this experience, the Center for Peacemaking helped her find a community of students who shared her interest in peace and justice.

As the only freshman to attend the vigil, Chiana was inspired not just by the weekend activities, but also by the examples set by the upperclassmen on the trip. It gave her confidence to do more with her Marquette experience.

Chiana took on a leadership position as a CRS ambassador. She also recognized that peace studies classes would pair well with her nursing major. She declared a minor in peace studies after taking the introductory course.

By her junior year, Chiana had become a role model and mentor to the new group of underclassmen frequenting the Center for Peacemaking who desire to work for peace and justice through their...
Chiana’s story (continued)

academics and extracurricular activities.

At the start of her final semester at Marquette, Chiana was honored with the Pedro Arrupe Award from the Marquette University Alumni Association (MUAA). This honor is given to one student from across the entire university who exemplifies leadership and commitment to service.

Chiana is excited to discover what her future holds. She feels that all of her experiences through the Center will continue to guide her throughout her life. “My involvement with the Center for Peacemaking has challenged my perspective,” she said. “It helped combine my love for Milwaukee and community with a social justice focus.”

Three years ago, Brian Martindale was among the first students we hired to help implement a survey of residents in Milwaukee’s Near West Side.

Having grown up in what he described as an isolated, suburban neighborhood, Brian found himself experiencing community in a new way once he moved to Milwaukee. Joining the survey team provided a unique opportunity to meet residents in all seven neighborhoods in the Near West Side.

Working with a team of students, Brian was part of an ambitious, year-long effort to collect resident input. Through this process, the students learned what residents identify as the most pressing needs in the neighborhood. They also became familiar with many of the nonprofits and community organizations in the neighborhood.

One day, while meeting with fellow students Elizabeth Killian and Elli Pointner, they saw an opportunity for Marquette students to get involved. Brian said, “As Marquette students and Near West Side Residents, we have a stake in how needs are met in the community.” They decided to create CAMPus Impact, a student organization focused on human-to-human interaction between Marquette students and other Near West Side residents through encounter, service, and immersion.

More than 65 students have become involved in CAMPus Impact. Students meet residents through volunteering at events like the Messmer Schools Pancake Breakfast, Neighborhood House Valentine’s Day Fashion Show, and ACTS Housing.

They also organize a Fall Break immersion experience, where students volunteer with various nonprofits in the Near West Side. For CAMPus Impact, service is
merely a medium. Their purpose is to build relationships with residents and to be active participants in their community. For their efforts, CAMPus Impact received the 2018 New Organization of the Year award from Marquette University.

The resident survey is still a staple of student participation with the organization. This year students have again knocked on every door in the seven Near West Side Neighborhoods to gather resident input on pressing community needs.

While out surveying before Thanksgiving, an elderly woman invited Brian into her house so they could sit down while she took the survey. Between answering questions on the survey, Brian said, “she shared some of her history with me, including that her family has lived in Milwaukee for six generations.”

“I shared a little bit about being a Marquette student and getting to meet people throughout the Near West Side.”

Brian said they had been talking for almost 30 minutes by the time she asked him where he was from. When she realized that Brian's family lives far away, she invited him to come back to her house to celebrate Thanksgiving with her family. Brian said, “This is one of my favorite stories about the neighborhood because it captures the way that our neighbors care for each other.”

Through his involvement with the Center for Peacemaking, Brian discovered that relationships are at the heart of any peacemaking work. He also realizes as he finishes his senior year that he might be moving to another city soon. Brian said, “Wherever I end up, I want to be in a community and be involved in it. I want to know my neighbors and volunteer in organizations in my neighborhood.”

Faculty fellow researches root causes of migration from El Salvador

Political Science professor Dr. Noelle Brigden brings years of experience to her classroom as a field researcher on human security and migration in Central America and Mexico. Last summer, she received a Rynne Research Fellowship to conduct preliminary research for her latest project on borders.

Dr. Brigden's project goes beyond just country borders; she explores the informal, socially constructed borders of street gangs and gated communities in urban Central America. Part of her interest stems from the region's dramatic increase in violence from street gangs and police in recent years. She explains this “has played a major role in pushing people out of the region as refugees.” The increasing violence limits people's movements within their communities.

For Dr. Brigden, the Rynne fellowship served as a springboard for her multi-year book project on borders and allowed her to develop a new course at Marquette called The Politics of Street Gangs.

The new course incorporates many stories and findings from her fellowship. To start the project, she held map-making workshops with young people in two communities on the outskirts of San Salvador, El Salvador. One community she worked with sits at the border of a street gang, and the other is a gated community.
Through the workshops, the participants produced maps of what they perceive and experience as their community boundaries. Now Brigden is using these maps to understand how people know where the borders are, the consequences of them, their legitimacy, and whether they move over time or are stable.

The map-making exercise examines issues such as threats of violence, spaces of belonging, and feelings of security and insecurity. It also provides Dr. Brigden with a wealth of content for her courses. Claire Guinta and Audrey Lodes—two of Dr. Brigden's former students—remember benefiting when she shared examples from her field research. Two examples in particular helped them understand the impact of socially constructed borders.

During a lecture, she recalled that some parents she met in El Salvador refused to send their kids to school due to the gang borders that make the trek too dangerous. In another example, other individuals she met with did not feel safe traveling through the city they live in to look for work.

The borders of street gangs have become so repressive and rigid that it is sometimes safer to take the very dangerous and traumatic journey of migrating across country borders than to navigate the informal, socially constructed borders around their homes.

The Politics of Street Gangs dives deep into the root causes of migration. One underlying theme of the class is the intersection between the lived experience of violence on the streets and domestic, international, and transnational politics. By contextualizing violence historically and globally, the class provides students with knowledge to challenge xenophobic and anti-immigration rhetoric.

With your support, Dr. Brigden's research is changing the way we understand and conceive borders and community mobility. Her teaching is inspiring students to work to address the root causes of migration.